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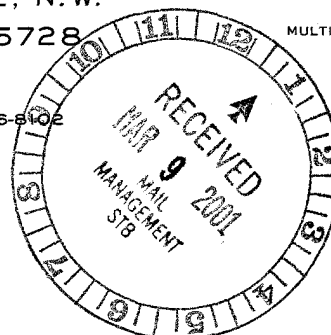
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March 9, 2001



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Mr. Vernon A. Williams, Secretary
Surface Transportation Board
1925 K Street, N.W., 7th Floor
Washington, D.C. 20423-0001

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Office of the Secretary
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Part of
Public Record

Re: Ex Parte No. 582 (Sub-No.1); Major Rail Consolidation Procedures

Dear Secretary Williams:

Pursuant to the Board's Decision, served February 23, 2001, in the above-referenced proceeding, please be advised that Edward H. Comer, Vice President and General Counsel intends to participate in the oral argument on behalf of Edison Electric Institute ("EEI"). Mr. Comer intends to address the issues raised in EEI's Comments, filed herein on November 17, 2000, December 18, 2000, and January 11, 2001.

EEI intends to emphasize (1) the enumerated, specific points advocated in its November 17, 2000 Comments, (2) its position agreeing with the view of Burlington Northern-Santa Fe Railway Company that the Board should look to the merger policies of the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission as a model, which would allow railroad merger proceedings to be expedited, provided that the Board adopted FERC's pro-competitive and customer-protection policies as well, and (3) that the approval of one or more U.S. transcontinental mergers would jeopardize the proposal of the Dakota, Minnesota & Eastern Railroad in Finance Docket No. 33407 (a matter of great importance to EEI and its members, and a project to which the Board has devoted a great amount of resources in the last several years).

We hereby request 15 minutes to speak on behalf of EEI.

Respectfully submitted,

Michael F. McBride

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cc: Parties of Record

Attorney for Edison Electric Institute